AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-13 (Cancelled).

14. (Original) A method for inspecting foreign matters in or on repeated micro-miniature patterns formed upon a surface of an object to be inspected, comprising following steps:

obtaining an object image by picking up the image of the micro-miniature pattern, under a bright field illumination, at a coordinate position on the surface of said object to be inspected, which is designated previously;

obtaining a reference image by picking up the image of the micro-miniature pattern, under a bright field illumination, at an another coordinate position on the surface of said object to be inspected, which is different from but corresponding to said coordinate position mentioned in the above step;

obtaining an arithmetic processed image between said object image and said reference image; and

deciding a presence of a foreign matter at the coordinate position on said object to be inspected, which is previously designated, on a basis of a condition of said arithmetic processed image obtained in the above step.

15. (Original) A method for inspecting foreign matters, as defined in claim

14, wherein said arithmetic processed image is a difference image between said object image and said reference image.

16. (Original) A method for inspecting foreign matters, as defined in claim 14, wherein said arithmetic processed image is an summation image between said object image and said reference image.

17. (Original) A method for inspecting foreign matters, as defined in claim 14, wherein the coordinate position on the surface of said object to be inspected which is designated previously, is a position of existing said foreign matter, which is defined by detecting a scattered light from the surface of the repeated micro-miniature pattern under a dark field when an inspection light is illuminated upon said object to be inspected from a light source.

18. (Original) A method for inspecting foreign matters, as defined in claim 14, wherein on the surface of said object to be inspected are formed at least two or more of same patterns repeatedly, and the position of said reference image is equal to that of said object image to inspected on the coordinates on each of said at least two or more of patterns.

19. (Original) A method for inspecting foreign matters, as defined in claim 15, wherein said deciding process decides a defect when said difference image

obtained is divided into at least two or more images.

20. (Original) A method for inspecting foreign matter, as defined in claim 16, wherein said deciding process compares said summation image to a predetermined value to decide a defect when at least two or more images are obtained as a result of the above comparison.

21. (New) A method for inspecting foreign matters, as defined in claim 14, further comprising a step for displaying a result of a decision made in the deciding step.

22. (New) A method for inspecting foreign matters, as defined in claim 15, further comprising a step for displaying a result of a decision made in the deciding step.

23. (New) A method for inspecting foreign matters, as defined in claim 16, further comprising a step for displaying a result of a decision made in the deciding step.

24. (New) A method for inspecting foreign matters, as defined in claim 17, further comprising a step for displaying a result of a decision made in the deciding step.

25. (New) A method for inspecting foreign matters, as defined in claim 18, further comprising a step for displaying a result of a decision made in the deciding step.

26. (New) A method for inspecting foreign matters, as defined in claim 19, further comprising a step for displaying a result of a decision made in the deciding step.

27. (New) A method for inspecting foreign matters, as defined in claim 20, further comprising a step for displaying a result of a decision made in the deciding step.